

# Foreword

An emergency is defined as an event that has impact across a community, which requires extraordinary use of resources and/or procedures to bring the community back to normal. Often it will cross jurisdictional boundaries and require resources from multiple agencies, including resources from the County, State and Federal governments. Recent events have demonstrated the need for communities to place greater and sustained emphasis on preparing for bio-terrorism and other threats previously considered remote possibilities. The City's emergency operations plan has served us well in the past, particularly for the common weather related emergency events. An emergency operations plans focuses on four elements: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

Mitigation involves review of vulnerabilities and risks to determine if there are viable, reasonable changes that can be made to reduce or lessen the impact of an event if one were to occur. Emergency preparedness includes such steps as developing, implementing and updating emergency plans; properly training response personnel; clarifying roles and responsibilities; and ensuring that appropriate supplies and equipment are available for response and recovery. Emergency response focuses on operational response or action taken during the actual event to minimize loss of life and property. After the event has occurred, the recovery efforts shift to reduce the physical, financial, psychological and service effects of an event by returning things to normal as quickly as possible.

No city, state or nation is prepared to say it can absolutely prevent large scale, manmade disasters, such as terrorist attacks. This plan and operational systems do provide the flexibility to respond to practically any type of event.

An emergency plan must assume that an event can outstrip the City's available resources. One strength of the plan is the articulation of standard operating procedures, protocols and actions to be taken by specific responsible parties if outside assistance is required. Effective training improves the chances of successful implementation. The plan also requires updating and cataloging of resource lists, agreements, contracts and arrangements for important services we may require from outside agencies, vendors and others during a disaster. Requesting resources is a multi-stepped process that is defined in the Basic Plan and certain annexes.

The City's Emergency Operations Plan has been assembled using two basic assumptions.

1. The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service will be the first responder for most events and thus will exercise incident command with the City playing a support role.
2. The City has limited current resources and when the event is of major proportions, the MOU with Montgomery County would be invoked along with the Council of Governments Mutual Aid Agreements.